

## IN BRIEF

Rotating behaviour of the incubating Yellow-bellied  
Fruit Pigeon *Treron waalia*

On 9 April 1971 at Pong Tamale (9°40'N, 0°50'W), northern Ghana, I noticed a green pigeon sitting on a nest c.3m up in a bare, unidentified, tree. I circled round the tree trying to get a good view of the bird, which proved to be a Yellow-bellied Fruit Pigeon *Treron waalia*. The bird imperceptibly shuffled round so that its upraised tail was always presented towards me. The grey-brown and white barred underside of the tail looked like a piece of bark. The rotation was quite deliberate, as I must have moved through an arc of well over 100° always seeing the undertail. I got a flank view only when I was a considerable distance from the nest tree. The nest came to grief on 21 April, a well incubated egg being found beneath the tree. A few miles away, on the 21 April, a second nest of the same species was found when a bird was startled from a partly foliated tree. A more cautious approach on 24 April enabled me to see that at this nest too the incubating bird rotated to keep its cocked-up tail towards the observer. On 5 June the adult bird was disturbed off at least one squab.

This behaviour is clearly cryptic, keeping the conspicuous purple shoulder patch, and possibly some yellow of the underparts, from view. Presumably it would be effective against ground based predators such as man or the Patas Monkey *Erythrocebus patas*. It does not appear to have been reported before from *T. waalia* and is not mentioned by Tarboton & Vernon (1971) in their notes on the breeding of *Treron australis*. However, Crome (1975) gives a detailed description of similar behaviour by incubating male Purple-crowned Pigeons *Ptilinopus superbus*. He emphasises that he saw rotating only by males which, unlike the females, have brilliant colours on their heads. *Treron* and *Ptilinopus* are probably not very closely related genera (Goodwin 1967).

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## References:

- Crome, F. H. J. 1975. Notes on the breeding of the Purple-crowned Pigeon. *Emu* 75: 172-174.  
 Goodwin, D. 1976. *Pigeons and Doves of the World*. British Museum (Natural History): London.  
 Tarboton, W. R. & Vernon, C. J. 1971. Notes on the breeding of the Green Pigeon *Treron australis*. *Ostrich* 42: 190-192.

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## Holarctic and Nearctic sandpipers

P. B. Taylor's paper 'Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* and Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* in Zambia' (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 100(4): 233-235) mentions both species as Nearctic vagrants. This is only true of *T. flavipes*. *C. melanotos* breeds extensively throughout the northeastern Palaearctic and should therefore properly be described as Holarctic. In the past, Ginn & Brooke (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 91(5): 125-126) and Ash (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 93(1): 3-6), amongst others, have also incorrectly referred to *C. melanotos* as a Nearctic wader. It appears to be a common error. Dement'ev, Gladkov & Spangenberg (*Birds of the Soviet Union* (1951), Vol 3. Translation: Jerusalem 1969: 169) show the breeding distribution of *C. melanotos* as Holarctic and also (p. 174) that of the sympatric *C. acuminata*.

The English usage of 'American Pectoral Sandpiper' for *C. melanotos* and 'Siberian Pectoral Sandpiper' for *C. acuminata* has undoubtedly led to confusion in the past and it is unfortunate that the confusion of distribution as a result of these names is still perpetuated. 'Pectoral Sandpiper' for the Holarctic *C. melanotos* and 'Sharp-tailed Sandpiper' for the Palaearctic *C. acuminata* are less confusing, as recommended by Voous (*Ibis* 115: 628) and their proper faunal regions should be recognised when they are quoted in the literature.

Observers therefore should not jump to the conclusion that every Pectoral Sandpiper